

REMARKS

This First Preliminary Amendment submits the above changes and the following information for entry into the record.

ABSTRACT

To conform to present US patent practice, the Abstract has been amended substantially identically to the amendments entered and approved in the prior applications, so as to reduce it to less than 150 words.

PENDING CLAIMS

Original Claims 2-39 have been deleted, and original Claim 1 is retained herein. Applicant respectfully informs the Office that a Second Preliminary Amendment containing new claims will be timely filed in order to adjust a clarity and/or focus of Applicant's invention. That is, all such new claims are unrelated to any prior art or scope adjustment, and are simply clarified claims in which Applicant is presently interested.

CLAIMS FOR PRIORITY UNDER 35 USC §§119 AND 120

Applicant claims domestic benefit under 35 USC §120 of prior US Applications No. 09/037,124 filed 9 March 1998, now US 6,292,618 B1, and No. 09/904,554 filed 16 July 2001, pending, and the specification has been amended herein to identify such prior applications. Applicant respectfully requests written acknowledgment of completion of all requirements for the claim for domestic benefit under §120 in the present continuation application.

Applicant also claims foreign priority under 35 USC §119 of Japanese Patent Publications No. 09-055869 filed 11 March 1997 and No. 09-067715 filed 21 March 1997. The certified copies of the priority documents were filed in prior Application No. 09/037,124, upon which domestic benefit is claimed under 35 USC §120.

Applicant respectfully requests written acknowledgment of completion of all requirements for the claim for foreign priority under §119 in the present continuation application.

ASSIGNEE OF ENTIRE INTEREST

HITACHI, LTD. is Assignee of entire right, title and interest in and to the present application by virtue of an Assignment dated 25 February 1998 filed in prior Application No. 09/037,124, upon which domestic benefit is claimed under §120, and recorded 9 March 1998 at Reel 9025, Frames 0487 *et seq.*

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Attorneys of record in prior US Applications No. 09/037,124 and No. 09/904,554 filed a Change of Address with No. 09/037,124 on 9 March 1998, and noted such filing in No. 09/904,554. In accordance with MPEP §601.03, Applicant requests entry of the correspondence address identified by Customer Number 020457 for the present case.

EXAMINER INVITED TO TELEPHONE

The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the local D.C. area number of 703-312-6600, to discuss an Examiner's Amendment or any other

suggested action for accelerating prosecution and moving the present application to allowance.

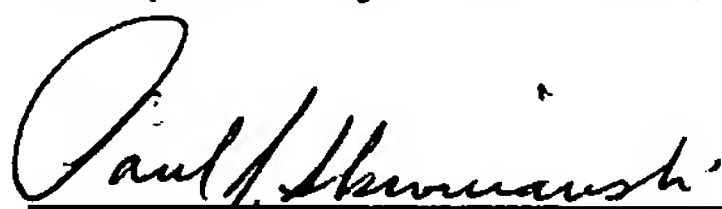
RESERVATION OF RIGHTS

It is respectfully submitted that any and all claim amendments and/or cancellations submitted within this paper and throughout prosecution of the present application are without prejudice or disclaimer of any scope or subject matter. Further, Applicant respectfully reserves all rights to file subsequent related application(s) (including reissue applications) directed to any/all previously claimed limitations/features which have been subsequently amended or cancelled, or to any/all limitations/features not yet claimed, *i.e.*, Applicant continues (indefinitely) to maintain no intention or desire to dedicate or surrender any limitations/features of subject matter of the present application to the public.

CONCLUSION

This First Preliminary Amendment is being submitted concurrently with the above-identified continuation application, so no Petition or fee is possible or required.

Respectfully submitted,



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